

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This Application is a national phase of International Application No. PCT/DE03/01233. A Preliminary Amendment was entered with the transmittal letter. This Preliminary Amendment amended certain claims and added claims 15 through 20. An Information Disclosure Statement was mailed on May 25, 2005.

Currently, Claims 1 through 20 are pending in the Application. All claims are rejected in a non-final action. The specification is objected to and the drawings are objected to.

A new sheet showing amended Figure 11 has been submitted with this response. The designation "44" on the right-hand side has been eliminated.

The drawings are also objected to based on claim language in claims 2 and 3. It is respectfully submitted that the amendments to the claims renders further amendments to the figures unnecessary.

The disclosure is objected to because of informalities in references to the figures. The listing of Drawings on page 5 of the specification has been amended to correct this informality.

Claims 1-20 are objected to because of certain additional informalities. Claims 5, 15 and 16 have been amended to correct these informalities. It is respectfully submitted that the objection to the claims because of the use of "characterized", does not require replacement in a U.S. patent.

Claims 2, 3 and 15-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 on the basis that the specification, while being enabling for one of the stopping faces or the component to feature a profile toothed surface, does not reasonably provide enablement for both having profiled toothed surfaces. The claims have been amended to render this objection moot by deleting the word “and/” so that the claims state that either a stopping surface or a component features a profiled surface.

Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 because the Examiner contends that the component (44) cannot be embodied as an elastic ring element and still function in the manner claimed in Claim 1.

It is respectfully contended that the ring segment-shaped component (44) as, for example, shown in Figure 11, can also be employed as a one-piece elastic ring element, which can also be embodied as a wedge in cross-section. This elastic ring element can be made of rubber or an elastimer. In addition, other cross-sections that deviate from a circular cross-section and form a frictional surface such as a cone (90) are conceivable. The point is a “wedge shaped” cross-section will still be formed which creates the frictional forces required to embody this invention.

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 as being indefinite because of the use of the phrase, “in particular”. This phrase has been deleted from these claims.

The claims are also objected to because of the phrase, “saw-toothed-like”, or “stair-step-like”. The claims have been amended to delete the “-like” portion of these phrases.

Claim 11 is objected to because of the phrase, “pre-stressed elastic element”. It is respectfully contended that this element becomes clear in claim 1 as currently amended.

Claims 1, 5, 6, and 8-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b). Claims 2, 3, 4, 15-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). It is respectfully contended that independent claim 1, as amended, and newly introduced independent claim 21 include elements that distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. Claim 1, as amended, now includes the element, “by means of a pre-stressed elastic element (48), wherein the elastic element (48) is embodied as an integral part of the component (44) and is formed together with it as a single part”. It is respectfully contended that none of the cited references disclose or suggest this claim element.

Newly added claim 21 recites, “the component (44) can be displaced radially to the longitudinal axis (30) by means of a pre-stressed elastic element (48), wherein the component (44) is embodied as a two-step wedge”. It is respectfully contended that this claim element is not disclosed anywhere in the prior art.

In the documents cited in the Office action, Giandinoto (U.S. Patent No. 3,848,477), Gunner (EP 0563410) and Zoino (U.S. Patent No. 4,212,379) disclose components with an inclined stopping face which are displaced radially to a shaft by a separate spring element, for example, a spiral spring. In Giandinoto, for example, Figure 4 shows part (36b) connected to the wedge-shaped component (26b). However, none of the prior art patents disclose embodiments in which the elastic element is embodied as an integral part of the component such as the component (44) in the Applicant’s invention. In the case of the newly amended and added claims, the elastic element (48) is embodied with the component (44) as a single part. As a

result, it is possible to dispense with a connecting technique between the elastic element and the component (44), whereby problems due to friction at the connecting point are avoided. For example, problems due to friction at the connection point between the spiral spring (36b) and the connecting element (34) of the structural element (26) of Giandinoto are avoided.

Additionally, it is respectfully contended that Giandinoto does not show a two-step wedge as recited in newly added claim 21. The Applicants respectfully contend that Figure 3 and Figure 4 in Giandinoto do not show a wedge as a component, which is arranged in a U-shaped manner around a shaft (42, 42b). A person skilled in the art would not derive any teaching or disclosure of embodying the wedge in a two-step profile to provide the function of the present invention. Giandinoto does not disclose or suggest a wedge with two inclined stopping faces, which are at a distance from one another, so that the stopping face has a shoulder. This is shown particularly well in Figures 9a and 9b of the application, in which the friction surfaces (62) are separated from one another by an intermediate surface (76). In this embodiment, the structural height (78) can be reduced advantageously while retaining a certain angle of inclination (40), wherein the shaft (18) can simultaneously be supported against the housing (15) over a large radial distance. This two-step wedge can be inserted into a device as shown in Figure 8. Neither Giandinoto or Gunner suggest such an embodiment of a two-step wedge since both patents disclose the friction surface of the wedge as always embodied as a single flat surface without a gradation.

It is therefore contended that the rejections in the first Office action under 35 U.S.C. §102 and 35 U.S.C. §103 are no longer applicable to the claims as amended. It is respectfully requested that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 and 35 U.S.C. §103 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-28 as currently amended or as newly added are allowable and such allowance is hereby requested. Additionally, the Applicants respectfully contend that the amendments to the specification have addressed the Examiner's objections and it is requested that all objections be withdrawn and the application proceed to allowance.

The undersigned is available for telephone consultation during normal business hours.

Respectfully submitted,



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